

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. FENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XIX. "HOW SHALL I MY TRUE LOVE KNOW?"

THEY lived their daily round, quietly, unvaryingly, prosaically, but not unhappily, for some weeks. As soon as Mrs. Ray got accustomed to the environs of her new abode, she grew bolder, and indulged in more distant walks and omnibus rides. And when once she had mastered her nervous dread of getting into wrong or doubtful localities, where she might be seen, recognised, and misunderstood, there were no limits to the courage with which she conducted her metropolitan explorations.

It was a source of never-ending pleasure, of eternally fresh, ever-springing delight, to the quietly reared old country lady to pace the streets, and speculate as to where the different barks afloat on the great tides of life for ever ebbing and flowing were bound. It was quite a charming diversion to watch the changes of fashion in the different shop-windows. And those days when she went to concerts with Jenifer, on whom Madame Voglio lavishly bestowed tickets, were white ones indeed in Mrs. Ray's uneventful calendar.

Jenifer meantime studied, practised, slaved unceasingly at the cultivation of her art, and though Madame Voglio still said little or nothing commendatory or encouraging, the girl knew that her mistress did not desire nor design to dishearten her, or in any way to throw cold water on her hopes and aspirations. But Jenifer fully realised—and well was it for her that she did so—that Madame Voglio would never hold out delusive promises for the sake of making the present agreeable. Also

that she would never give honour until honour was very much due indeed.

"You will find plenty of people, who know nothing about it, to tell you that you are a second Patti without her opportunities. I will only tell you of your faults and follies of style, of your failures, and absurdities, and ignorances, and I shall do you the most good," the mistress would say to the pupil sometimes, when the latter knew in her own inner consciousness that she had done well enough to please even her mistress. And then Jenifer would redouble her efforts and application, and take natural delight in the expression of satisfaction which would beam forth from every feature of madame's fat, flat, ugly, clever, good-humoured face.

They had no social life, these two women who had been the centres of the best social life in the region round about Moor Royal. Day after day rolled over their heads for many weeks, bringing them absolutely no change in their home-life—or rather lodging-life—save a chat with Mrs. Hatton.

Of Hubert and Effie, to Mrs. Ray's soft, pained regret, and to Jenifer's indignation mixed with contempt, they saw nothing.

Sometimes a hurried note would come from Effie, dated from some watering-place hotel, or from the Jervoise's London house, saying that "Hugh and herself hoped to be in London shortly," or "purposed leaving town in an hour or two," as the case might be, but invariably making some excuse, which had not even the merit of being plausible, for not coming to Hamilton Place. Sometimes a note would arrive spasmodically from Effie in a hansom—a note that did not contain a particle of intelligence that would not just as well have kept till the middle of next week. But Effie liked

sending telegrams, and notes in hansoms. The doing so threw an atmosphere round her, the sender, of living at high pressure, and of being in hourly request in some beautiful world of gaiety and festivity of which Mrs. Ray and Jenifer could naturally know but little.

One other social episode there had been from which Jenifer had permitted herself to hope much, and expect a little. Mrs. Archibald Campbell had called with her brother, Captain Edgecumb, and had found Mrs. Ray at home alone. The visitor had said a little, but said it warmly, about "hoping soon to make Miss Ray's acquaintance, and to be fortunate enough to find her at home the next time" she came. But either some accident had occurred to dislocate Mrs. Archibald Campbell's intentions, or she forgot the object of them. For many weeks had elapsed since her first visit to the Rays, and she had not paid a second.

As for Captain Edgecumb, though he had called two or three times, he had not been rewarded by a sight of Jenifer. On one occasion she was at home, but she was practising, and so, for all the good her being at home did him, she might as well have been at Madame Voglio's. On other occasions both she and her mother were absent. But Mrs. Hatton received and entertained him, and thought so little of the labour involved in this good work, that she said nothing at all about it to those for whose sakes she avowedly incurred it.

She was undoubtedly an adept in the art of not only making friends, but of making them useful, this clever, enduring little lady in whose house the Rays lodged. When, through what he then considered "an unfortunate combination of circumstances," Mrs. Hatton received him in the absence of his friends the first time, Captain Edgecumb was more struck with her dignified reserve, than with anything else about her. The next time he was fortunate enough to find her acting as the Rays' representative, he was surprised and exquisitely charmed to find her breaking through this reserve, and treating him with an admixture of cordiality and confidence that was infinitely bewitching.

She had no settled plan, no defined object in striving to win this extremely casual acquaintance to be if "less than lover," certainly "more than friend." But she had an impulse to do it, knowing that, in her life especially, fortuitous circum-

stances were very apt to combine to unsteady and upset any position to which she might through much tribulation have attained. That she obeyed her impulse was not extraordinary. Her powers of reasoning and sense of self-preservation alike impelled her to obey every impulse which might propel her on to a pleasant landing-place, provided there were no dangerous spots to be overleapt in getting to it. As to what might be beyond the apparently safe and pleasant place, that was a matter for after consideration! All she concerned herself about was the goal in sight that looked good. And it looked good to her now to be sufficiently friendly with Captain Edgecumb to get him to introduce her to his sister, Mrs. Archibald Campbell.

Mrs. Hatton had absolutely no design beyond this at present, and she might have achieved her aim without further thought or trouble had she been contented to run straight, or play fair.

But she had got out of the habit of doing these things, therefore she went as it seemed out of wilfulness into devious paths, and strove to count by tricks rather than honours.

That the Rays knew nothing of his visits was a fact of which for her own purposes Mrs. Hatton kept Captain Edgecumb in ignorance at first. After a time or two he ceased to express any very bitter disappointment about missing them, either by word or look, and Mrs. Hatton argued that she did her friendly duty by them all round, in entertaining her lodgers' friend during her lodgers' absence.

"It was so kind of him to stay and enliven a poor little solitary woman when he had nothing better to do," she would tell him, so pathetically that he really believed himself to be a kind and magnanimous fellow at heart, for keeping up this sort of underhand intimacy with Mrs. Hatton. He pitied her profoundly. He did not know why exactly, or indeed at all, but still he frequently found himself saying, after an hour's chat with her in her pretty, well-arranged sitting-room—the furniture and adornments of which "were all in memoriam of those brighter days" she had known," she told him—"I do pity that poor little woman, after all." "After all" what, he would have found it difficult to tell himself. But his assurance to himself that he "really did pity that poor little woman," seemed to do away

with anything that savoured of being surreptitious in the nature of their intercourse.

Meantime he was as firmly and fixedly determined as ever to propose to Jenifer Ray at a fitting opportunity. That the fitting opportunity was long in coming was not his fault. He would be quite ready for it whenever it should come.

Not only this, but he was really making plans for his future, and generally rearranging his own life, so as to make it more in accordance with the one she had projected for herself. It was no part of his design to have to go off to India or South Africa with his regiment at any given moment, leaving a wife singing like a syren in public. Accordingly, as he had made up his mind that Jenifer should be his wife, and should at the same time increase their income to the best of her vocal powers, he retired from the service, and looked out for remunerative employment in London.

It was while he was occupied in looking out for this, having at the time his headquarters in his father's house, where he found life rather dull, that he lapsed into the habit of beguiling the tedium of existence for Mrs. Hatton, for an hour or two, two or three times a week.

His estimate of Jenifer was a juster one than one would have supposed his slender knowledge of her could have formed. He knew that she was over Mrs. Hatton's head altogether, as far as the finer, stancher, and truer qualities were concerned. He knew also that Mrs. Hatton's objectless borrowings, and evasions, and concealments—though harmless enough, he considered—would be repulsive and ridiculous, cowardly and contemptible, in Jenifer Ray; and at the same time, though he did admire Jenifer Ray more for knowing this, he did not admire Mrs. Hatton less. If Jenifer ever became his wife—"When Jenifer became his wife," was the way he worded it to himself—he should not scruple to tell her that he had grown to be friendly with "poor little Mrs. Hatton, while she, Jenifer, was absorbed in her praiseworthy endeavours to fit herself for the concert-boards." Naturally, if Jenifer had not been so much absorbed, he would not have fallen into the habit of such intimacy. As it was, there was nothing reprehensible in the habit: on the contrary, there was much that was excellent about it, for without Jenifer being bothered and distracted to tell him herself, he heard of her and of her well-

being, and of the sure progress she was making in her studies.

For Mrs. Hatton fed him freely with the conversational food he liked best. She had very early in their intercourse discovered that he liked nothing better than to talk of himself, and to hear of Miss Ray, and she, Mrs. Hatton, gratified him deftly. He would not ask any questions about the girl he wanted for his wife of the woman he intuitively felt to be a lesser one than Jenifer. But he would show, unconsciously, by the way he listened that it pleased him to hear how she was, and how she looked, and what she was doing.

While it pleased him to do this, Mrs. Hatton was very well satisfied to give him the pleasure. It was not for her to rebuff anyone who called in a friendly spirit on ladies who were lodging in her house, and at the same time it was really laudable on her part to make an effort to make friends to herself now in comparatively fine weather, who might prove useful should the weather become rougher. For, as she always reminded herself, she was a solitary, uncared-for, unprotected little specimen of humanity. Self-help was the first law of nature, expediency, and taste with her. And in helping herself to as large a share of Captain Edgecumb's interest, and good-hearted desire to smooth any portion of her path that he possibly could smooth, without doing detriment to any other or any others who might have the closer claim on him, was truly not doing anything unworthy.

Distinctly not! Mrs. Hatton gave herself the assurance that her line of procedure was not only not unworthy, but even essayed to prove to herself that it was not even censurable, which was saying a great deal more. A vast number of unworthy deeds may be done, and are done daily and hourly—as for example when a carefully calculated snub is administered by some unappreciative but potent family or circle, to a struggling, writhing, impotent, sensitive young aspirant for something beyond that which the family or circle deems within reach or secure. But there is nothing that calls for censure on the part of the snubbers. They have acted according to their lights, and unworthy, cruel even as their act may be, they are as a rule very much applauded for what they have done, by all right-minded people.

So Mrs. Hatton sailed her light little pleasure skiff—the frail little boat in which she had embarked with Captain Edgecumb

—easily and agreeably over a summer sea. He thought her a "charming, good-hearted, much-to-be-pitied little woman," and she thought him an estimable, possibly useful, and amenable ass! And they neither of them thought that any third person could be injuriously affected by their thoughts of, or manner to, each other.

Jenifer coming home one day at an untimely hour, thrown out of her reckoning by reason of a hastily but severely developed cold in Madame Voglio's head and throat, found Captain Edgecumb in the act of knocking at their door.

To say that her heart "bounded" would be saying too much. As a matter of fact, hearts in a state of physical healthiness don't "bound"; but it is true that the girl experienced a sense of sudden elation. It was only a few weeks, after all, since she had left Moor Royal, and all that living at Moor Royal meant to a Miss Ray. But during those few weeks it had been ground into her that she was a very unimportant person in the scheme of humanity, and that few, if any, of her old friends remembered or cared aught about her. Now, suddenly before her eyes, in the act of seeking her, rose the form of the well-looking young soldier, who had played tennis with her in Devonshire, and had been (according to Effie) rather more than a little in love with her. Jenifer had not the slightest intention of responding to that love. But she was essentially human and womanly, and she was delighted to see him on the door-step, looking, from her point of view, ready to proffer it again.

He met her beautifully, taking the circumstances into consideration—the circumstances being that at the moment he caught sight of her, he was in the act of enquiring if Mrs. Hatton was at home. But now he disregarded Ann's answer in the affirmative, and met his true-love beautifully.

"Fortune smiles on me to-day; you're not with that eternal Madame Voglio, who must be looked upon as a hated rival by all your other friends." Then they shook hands, and he followed her into the house and on to the drawing-room, where her mother was sitting with her bonnet on, waiting for Jenifer to go with her to the "old masters."

Captain Edgecumb followed Miss Ray with his head well up, and manly integrity strongly expressed in every line of his face and movement of his figure. But at

the same time, for all this vivid expression of manly integrity, he was acutely conscious of a certain grim sense of amusement depicting itself on Ann's visage. It was sternly suppressed almost immediately, but not before Captain Edgecumb had seen it, and gathered from it the humbling conviction that Ann knew, as well as he did himself, that he would not tell Miss Ray that, but for her unexpected appearance, his visit would have been paid, "as usual," to Mrs. Hatton.

However, Ann, whatever depths of design she might fathom, was comfortably reticent about making public the result of her investigations. So, though he knew Ann had found him out to a certain extent, he knew that her fidelity to her mistress would prevent her making awkward revelations to anyone else. Accordingly his visit was accepted and treated by the Rays as if it had been the genuine, unforced article which it was not.

Jenifer's cordiality and pleasure at seeing him again were genuine enough. He was a gracious bit of the old life, let in easily and skilfully to the new. He admired their rooms as freshly as if he had not seen them half-a-dozen times under Mrs. Hatton's auspices, and asked as many questions about their daily routine, and Jenifer's progress under Madame Voglio, as if Mrs. Hatton had not informed him on these points to the fullest extent of her own knowledge. And all the time the Rays did not think of their complicated little landlady, and Captain Edgecumb did not speak of her.

By-and-by he escorted the two ladies to see the "old masters." He walked away by Jenifer's side with a hopeful air of part-proprietorship in that young lady, that was infinitely amusing to Mrs. Hatton and Ann, both of whom were regarding the exit of the trio from behind Mrs. Hatton's well-arranged curtains. Mrs. Hatton betrayed neither surprise nor annoyance at having been thus ignored by the man who had been her frequent visitor of late. But Ann had studied her mistress for many years, and she boded no pleasant things for either Miss Ray or Captain Edgecumb, from the merry smile with which that mistress turned aside from her post of observation.

"How thoughtful and kind of Captain Edgecumb to make no demand on my time and attention to-day, isn't it, Ann?" she asked demurely.

"I should hope his thoughtful kindness

will put a stop to any more conjuring and romancing about him," Ann replied sourly. Then as her mistress exclaimed impatiently "that she had so little pleasure in her desolate life, it would be hard indeed if she was to be deprived of the change and distraction which a little fresh society gave her," the old servant's face relaxed, and her voice shook with emotion, as she answered:

"If one could be sure that master was dead, I'd never say a word; but he's one of those deep ones, he may come at any time, and I want you to be in the right with him as you've always been."

"You never objected to Mr. Boldero coming to see me, and being kind to me."

"Because Mr. Boldero thinks you what he'd like his sister to be, and Captain Edgecumb doesn't."

SOME THINGS OF OLD SPAIN.

QUITE at the opening of the eighteenth century, the Countess Danois, a lady of high social position at the French Court, was minded to pay a visit to a kinswoman married to a Spanish grandee of rank and influence, who resided for the most part at Madrid. The countess appears to have possessed considerable powers of observation, combined with the tendency to hasty generalisation which characterises the French people, but which also imparts an indescribable vivacity and sprightliness to their narrative correspondence. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to premise that in all comparisons the Spaniards and their usages are pronounced decidedly inferior to Frenchmen, though accredited with many excellent qualities and accomplishments.

At that period no country in Europe had much reason to boast of its city streets or country roads, but Spain seems to have enjoyed a peculiarly bad pre-eminence in that respect. Even in Madrid, the streets are described as "long and even, and of a good largeness, but there is no place worse paved. Let one go as softly as possible, yet one is almost jumbled and shaken to pieces. There are more ditches and dirty places than in any city in the world. The horses go up to the bellies, and the coaches up to the middle, so that it dashes all upon you, and your clothes are spoiled, unless you either pull up the glasses, or draw the curtains very often. The water comes into the coaches

at the bottom of the boots, which are open." Notwithstanding the filthy condition of the streets, it was a common practice for dashing young cavaliers to walk by the side of a carriage containing ladies to whom they desired to be particularly attentive, and it may be imagined that their brilliant costumes were not beautified by the operation. A worse fate often befell those who at nightfall threaded their way through the dark thoroughfares with the intention of serenading the object of their passing adoration, for in Madrid, as in Edinburgh, it was customary to empty the slops of the household out of the windows.

Apparently to compensate for the slowness of locomotion in the capital, fashion exacted a tremendous pace in the country, with the not unfrequent result of an upset, or, at least, of a broken axle-tree, or a wheel coming to grief. Mules were in greater request than horses, six being harnessed to a carriage in rural districts, but only four in the capital. The traces, made of silk or hemp, were outrageously long, so that the interval between each pair of animals exceeded three ells. The coachman, instead of occupying the box-seat, rode one of the foremost mules, lest he should overhear the conversation going on behind his back, as happened in the case of the coachman of the Duke d'Olivares, who revealed a matter of great importance with which he had thus become acquainted.

Country houses, when not actually inhabited, were shut up and abandoned to the winds of heaven. The Escorial itself was practically left unguarded. Travellers were thus obliged to take with them whatever provisions they were likely to require during their excursion, for even bread was seldom procurable, and never of good quality. Country inns were simply detestable. The entrance was always through the stable, in which mules and muleteers were huddled promiscuously. Access to the habitable part of the house was obtained by means of a ladder, at the head of which stood the hostess in holiday attire, having made the new arrivals wait in their litters until she was presentable. Having at last got thus far, "you are showed a chamber whose walls are white enough, hung with a thousand little scurvy pictures of saints. The beds are without curtains, the covertures of cotton, the sheets as large as napkins, and the napkins like pocket-handkerchiefs; and you must

be in some considerable town to find four or five of them; for in other places there are none, no more than there are forks. They have only a cup in the house; and if the mule-drivers get first hold of it, which commonly happens if they please (for they are served with more respect than those whom they bring), you must stay patiently till they have done with it, or drink out of an earthen pitcher."

The only fire at which a wet and shivering traveller could hope to dry and warm himself was in the kitchen, to which there was no chimney, the smoke escaping through a hole in the ceiling. "I think," the countess remarks, "there cannot be a better representation of hell than these sort of kitchens and the persons in them; for, not to speak of this horrible smoke, which blinds and chokes one, there are a dozen men and as many women, blacker than devils, nasty, and stinking like swine, and clad like beggars. There are always some of them impudently grating on a sorry guitar and singing like a cat roasting." The women had their hair dishevelled and hanging about their ears, with glass necklaces "twisted about their necks like ropes of onions," but which served to "cover the nastiness of their skin." They were also given to pilfering, and regarded the eighth commandment as a dead letter.

No matter at what hour the traveller arrived, he would find nothing in the house fit to eat or drink. A messenger had to be sent round to the different shops to buy meat, bread, groceries, and wine, and then the cooking spoiled everything. Mutton was fried with oil, partridges were dried up to a cinder, roast joints were served up as black as smoke and dirty fingers could make them. The fish-pasties might have been good had they not been stuffed with garlic, saffron, and pepper; while the bread, though white and sweet, was so badly kneaded and baked that it lay "as heavy as lead in the stomach." It was made in the shape of flat cakes, about the thickness of a man's finger. The grapes, however, were large and of delicate flavour, and the lettuces so excellent that the whole world could not afford better.

The militia may have been good food for powder, but the description of them reminds one of Sir John Falstaff's tatterdemalions. "You shall seldom see," said Don Sancho Sanniento, "in a whole regiment any soldier that has more shirts than

that on his back, and the stuff they wear seems for its coarseness to be made of pack-thread. Their shoes are made of cord; they wear no stockings; yet every man has his peacock or dunghill-cock's feather in his cap, which is tied up behind, with a rag about his neck in form of a ruff; their swords oftentimes hang by their sides, tied with a bit of cord, and without any scabbard. The rest of their arms is seldom in better order."

The postal arrangements left much to be desired. Letters were put into a sack, tied with rotten cord to the shoulders of the postmen, or "foot-posts" as they were called, and as these worthies were in the habit of drinking themselves drunk, the contents of their wallets often fell into wrong hands. It seems strange to us at the present day that the Countess Danois and one of her companions, Don Frederigo de Cardonna, should have diverted themselves with opening and reading some letters which had accidentally been dropped on the staircase, and that one of them should have been translated for the benefit of the countess's correspondent in France. Neither the lady nor the cavalier appears to have thought that there was anything objectionable in their conduct. The countess had barely finished transcribing the purloined letter when she received a visit from the Alcalde's son, who is described as a guap, corresponding to our dandy or exquisite.

"His hair was parted on the crown of his head, and tied behind with a blue ribbon, about four fingers' breadth, and about two yards long, which hung down at its full length; his breeches were of black velvet, buttoned down on each knee with five or six buttons; he had a vest on so short that it scarce reached below his pockets, a scolloped doublet, with hanging sleeves, about four fingers' breadth, made of white embroidered sattin. His cloak was of black bays and he, being a spark, had wrapped it round his arm, because this is more gallant, with a very light buckler in his hand, and which has a steel pike standing out in the middle; they carry it with them when they walk in the night on any occasion; he held in the other hand a sword, longer than an half-pike, and the iron for its guard was enough to make a breast and back plate. These swords being so long that they cannot be drawn out unless a man has the arms of a giant, the sheath therefore flies open in laying the finger on a little spring. He had likewise a dagger, whose blade was very

narrow ; it was fastened to his belt on his back ; he had such a straight collar that he could neither stoop nor turn about his head. Nothing can be more ridiculous than what they wear about their necks, for it is neither a ruff, band, nor cravat. His hat was of a prodigious size, with a great band twisted about it, bigger than a mourning one. His shoes were of as fine leather as that whereof gloves are made, and all slashed and cut, notwithstanding the cold, and so exactly close to his feet, and having no heels, that they seemed rather pasted on. In entering he made me a reverence after the Spanish fashion, his two legs cross one another, and stooping as women do when they salute one another ; he was strongly perfumed, and they are all so."

A few leagues from Madrid, Countess Danois was invited to dine at a fine house belonging to an old gentleman named Don Augustin Pachelo, who had lately married his third wife, Donna Theresa de Feguerroa, a lovely young girl of "sweet seventeen." Although it was ten o'clock the lady had not yet left her bed, to which the countess was conducted, while the gentlemen remained in the gallery, "because it is not the custom in Spain for men to go into women's chambers while they are in bed ; even a brother had not this privilege, unless his sister be sick." So particular were the Spaniards in some matters, that before Donna Theresa ventured to put on her stockings and shoes she locked and bolted the door, saying that she would rather die than that the gentlemen should see her feet, which happened to be remarkably small. The first thing in the morning and the last thing at night was to take a little cup full of red paint, and with a good-sized pencil lay it on cheeks and chin, under the nose, over the eyebrows and tips of the ears, and even inside the palms and fingers of the hand. Donna Theresa confessed that she would rather dispense with all this painting, but could not do so as the custom was universal. One of her women perfumed her from head to foot with the smoke of choice pastilles, while another squirted through her teeth a shower of orange-flower water over her face. Dinner was served at an early hour, a cloth being laid on a table for the gentlemen, and on the floor for the ladies—a reminiscence of the Moorish times when women occupied a very inferior position in the social system. The countess, however, was unable to accomplish the feat of dining with her legs under her, so that in the end the ladies

were likewise promoted to the dignity of sitting at the table, though Donna Theresa was a little awkward at first, and explained that she had never before sat on a chair.

In Madrid the number of domestic servants that every rich man was expected to maintain was an intolerable nuisance. The menial servants, indeed, were paid no more than two reals a day for food and wages, or about sixpence of the English currency of the period. Nor did the "gentlemen" attendants receive above fifteen crowns a month, "with which they must wear velvet in winter and taffaty in summer, but then they live upon onions, pease, and such like mean stuff, and this makes the pages and footmen as greedy as dogs." Indeed, the Spaniards were exceedingly temperate when eating and drinking at their own expense, but were not so easily satisfied when feasting at another's cost. "I have seen," remarks the countess, "persons of the highest quality eat with us like so many wolves, they were so hungry." They themselves ascribed their voracity to the excellence of the French ragouts. For the most part the Spaniards drank very little wine, and that much diluted. At the death of the head of a family the servants were transferred, as an addition to the household of his son and successor. The women servants usually were taken over by a daughter, or daughter-in-law, when the mother died, and so on to the fourth generation. Very often they were not required to do any work at all, but were expected to present themselves now and again to show that they were still in the land of the living. The Duchess of Ossuna told the countess, who was astonished to see so many chambermaids and waiting-women, that she had got rid of five hundred, and had then only three hundred in her service. The king, it was said, had fully ten thousand persons dependent on him in Madrid alone. For all that it was forbidden, save in the case of ambassadors and strangers, to go out with more than three attendants, of whom one must be a groom, to walk or run by the side of the horses, "to hinder them from putting and entangling their legs in their long traces." The groom was not suffered to carry a sword as the footmen did. All three were middle-aged men, of a tawny hue and clownish aspect, with their hair cut close on the top of their heads.

A truly oriental custom existed in those days, which was often attended with much inconvenience. If one inadvertently praised any article belonging to another, the latter was bound to urge its acceptance on the admirer. The Countess Danois chanced to compliment Don Antonio of Toledo, son to the Duke of Alva, on the beauty of his harness, which was of an Isabella colour. He replied that he laid them at her feet, and that same evening she was informed that his six horses were in her stable, and it was with great difficulty that she induced him to take them back again. She herself, at the very outset, had a disagreeable experience of this custom. She was in the habit of winding up her watch at noon, the ordinary dinner-hour, and one of her women brought it to her as usual for that purpose. It was a striking watch of Tompion's make, and cost fifty louis d'or. Her banker, who was seated beside her, expressed curiosity to look at it. Whereupon she carelessly handed it to him, with a few words of civility. To her dismay he rose, made her a profound reverence, avowed his unworthiness to receive such a favour, and protested that he would never part with the watch under any circumstances. He then kissed it, and dropped it into his capacious pocket.

Male and female dwarfs constituted a never failing feature in every rich household. Both sexes were hideously ugly, but the women looked especially repulsive from their hair hanging loose about their ears, and reaching to the ground. They were clad in rich apparel, and being in their mistress's confidence, were denied nothing they coveted.

Farthingales were no longer of such a prodigious bigness that hardly any doors were wide enough for them. At that time the overgrown article was worn only in the presence of royalty. Elsewhere ladies contented themselves with a vestment of much smaller dimensions, "made of thick copper wire in a round form, about the girdle; there are ribbons fastened to them, with which they tie another round of the same form, which falls down a little lower, and which is wider; and of these they have five or six rounds which reach down to the ground, and bear out their petticoats and other garments."

The Spanish women being, as a rule, of short stature, they supplemented nature by walking on tall pattens, as high as small stilts. They have certainly improved

in their gait since those days, when they kept their elbows close to their sides and glided along with great rapidity, without raising their feet, though they made slow and awkward progress with their six-inch high pattens. Not unfrequently they wore a dozen under-garments, and never fewer than seven or eight in the hottest weather. The fashion of their dress was quite unsuitable to their abnormal leanness, which they regarded as a beauty. In front their bodies were shaped very high, but behind they were cut very low, and made a great display of the brown skin "glewed to their backs." Their shoulders, however, were relieved by red paint. Their hands were small, white, and well-shaped. People of quality indulged in very fine linen, which was so scarce and dear that the commonalty, whose vanity made them ape their betters, were constrained to make shift with a single garment, and while it was being washed they either remained in bed or went about without one. In the matter of jewellery, Spanish ladies were very extravagant. Precious stones, however, were badly set, being over-framed in gold. It was not enough, as in France, to possess one costly set. Fashion demanded that a Spanish lady should have eight or ten sets, some of diamonds, others of rubies, emeralds, pearls, and turquoises. "The ladies," as we learn from the Countess Danois, "wear at the top of their stays a broad knot of diamonds, from whence there hangs a chain of pearls, or ten or twelve knots of diamonds, which they fasten at the other end to their sides. They never wear any necklace, but they wear bracelets, rings, and pendants; the latter of which are longer than a person's hand, and so heavy that I have wondered how they could carry them without tearing out the lobes of their ears, to which they add whatever they think pretty. I have seen some have large watches hanging there, others padlocks of precious stones, and even your fine-wrought English keys and little bells. They also carry upon their sleeves, their shoulders, and all about their cloaths *Agnus Deis* and small images. They have their heads stuck full of bodkins, some made of diamonds in the shape of a fly, and others like butter-flies, whose colours are distinguished by various stones."

In the best houses the ladies were accustomed to sit on the ground cross-legged. Visitors were announced by a dwarf, kneeling upon one knee, whereupon all the company rose from the ground, an opera-

tion repeated fifty or sixty times during a call. There was no kissing, lest perchance they might rub the colour off one another's faces. The ordinary form of salutation was with ungloved hands, and in conversation the second personal pronoun, thou or thee, was always used. They never addressed one another by their titles, but by their christian-names, Donna Maria, Donna Clara, or whatever it might be, so that all acquaintances were deemed to be socially equal. At the same time a wide gulf was fixed between the nobility and members of the different professions. "The wives of the gentlemen of the long robe never so much as visit the court ladies, and a man of inferior birth never marries with a woman of quality; you never see those who are not gentlemen mix with the nobility, as in France."

The toilet-table was meagrely furnished. The Countess Danois observed in the bed-chamber of the Marchioness of Alconnizas, "one of the neatest and richest ladies," that, although the toilet-service was laid out upon a silver table, it consisted only of a small piece of calico, a looking-glass not larger than one's hand, two combs, a little box, and a small china cup containing the white of an egg beaten up with sugar-candy, which was used to take the dirt off the face and make it shine. Notwithstanding the refinement of Spanish manners, ladies and gentlemen picked their teeth at table "with grave looks," no matter who might be present. Gravity was held of great account. To acquire a look of gravity quite young ladies had huge spectacles on their noses, fastened to their ears, but through which they were never minded to look. Another curious fancy was to eat quantities of medicinal earth. Penitents were sometimes enjoined to abstain from eating this unwholesome stuff for a whole day, which was considered a severe penance. It was believed to be an antidote to poison, and to cure all manner of diseases. Countess Danois had a cup made of this earth which spoiled the flavour of wine, but purified water, and being exceedingly porous would quickly absorb all the liquid poured into it.

Some ladies went a dozen times in the day to hear mass, but paid little attention to what was going on sacerdotally. A fan was indispensable, summer or winter. Their muffs, made of the finest martens and sables, were above half an ell in length, and cost four or five hundred crowns

apiece. In church they squatted on the ground, and were continually taking snuff, though without letting it fall on their dress. Each time the elevation took place both men and women struck their breasts with their fists, and seemingly with great violence. At the termination of the service the professed gallants, who were marked by a piece of crape round their hats, ranged themselves round the place where the holy water was kept, and presented some to each lady as she passed, together with a little complimentary speech to which a courteous reply was usually returned. Some jealous husbands, however, complained of this practice to the Pope's nuncio, who forbade its continuance under pain of excommunication.

Lent was a very trying season for the French travellers, though they observed only Passion Week. For one thing, butter was scarce, dear, and bad. It was brought in hog's bladders from a place thirty leagues distant, and was full of worms. Most people, therefore, preferred olive-oil, when capable of digesting it. Salt-water fish was seldom procurable, though sometimes salmon pies, seasoned with spice and saffron, could be had and were not much amiss. But nobody who could afford to pay a shilling to the Pope's nuncio for a dispensation ever thought of fasting in Lent, especially as the same license gave permission to eat the head, feet, and inwards of poultry every Saturday throughout the year. We are not told, however, what became of the nobler and daintier parts of the bird. Butcher's meat was as easily obtainable in Lent as at any other period—that is to say, the purchase was effected with the same trouble and annoyance. The meat was not exposed to view, but was shut up in the shop. The bargaining was transacted at a little window. The customer asked, perhaps, for a loin of veal and paid down the money. After a while, a leg of mutton would be offered to him, to be succeeded, if rejected, by a short rib of beef. If this too was refused, his money would be thrown to him, and the window shut down. The usual plan was to mention the quantity of meat, and leave it to the butcher to give what he pleased. In any case it was sure to be lean, dry, and black; but it made better soup than French meat. Good wine was not to be had in Madrid. It was strong, and both tasted and smelt of pitch from being kept in bags made of buckskin. It was retailed in very small quantities. The stuff sold to the

poor was made worse than it would otherwise have been by being allowed to stand all day in an open basin, so that it became sour, and emitted a pungent odour.

Religion and gallantry were curiously mixed up together in those days. The disciplinarians were a fantastic reminiscence of the flagellants of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They were attired rather gaily and walked with mincing steps, but when they stopped before their mistress's window they showed themselves very much in earnest, and were encouraged by their lady-love to flay themselves alive. "When they meet a handsome woman they whip themselves after such a rate as to make the blood fly about her. This is esteemed a particular civility, and the lady acknowledges and thanks them for it."

By way of variety some of the disciplinarians stuck needles into sponges, with which they pricked their shoulders and sides as if they enjoyed the operation. Some of the young sprigs of nobility were in the habit of sallying forth at night, attended by friends and footmen with lighted flambeaux of white wax, and carrying the instrument of penance, ornamented with streamers of ribbon, presented by their mistress. Having taken up their station beneath her balcony, they would lay on with might and main until their blood flowed copiously. Other penitents, like the Indian jogees, would walk about with as many as seven swords run through the skin of their arms and body, and as they went barefooted over the sharp uneven stones they occasionally tripped, and in falling hurt themselves grievously. A good deal of irreverential familiarity was combined with the religious traditions of the Spaniards of that period. On the occasion of the Corpus Christi festival the king and the whole court followed the Holy Sacrament through the streets, carrying each a lighted candle of white wax. After the procession had returned to the church whence it started, everybody hurried home to dine, and then hastened to witness an open-air performance of a curious jumble of things sacred and profane. The one at which the Countess Danois was present purported to represent an assembly of the knights of St. James, to whom came the Saviour with a request that he might be admitted into their order. The knights drew apart and discussed the application. Some were in favour of receiving the Saviour into their order, but the elder men objected that the applicant was an individual of

very humble extraction. His father, they said, was a poor carpenter, while his mother was a sempstress, and worked with her needle. Meanwhile the Saviour testified extreme impatience at the delay, and was quite overcome on learning that their final decision was unfavourable. To soothe his wounded feelings, however, they agreed to institute a new order, to be called the Order of Christ, and the proposition appeared to give satisfaction to everyone.

It is quite intelligible that the countess should be unable to control her painful emotions on beholding for the first time the horrors of the bull-ring. At that time lives were wantonly thrown away in the hope of winning a smile or the flutter of a handkerchief from an indulgent mistress. Men of noble birth then entered the arena, and prided themselves on their dexterity in avoiding the rush of the infuriated beast, and on their steadfast courage in accepting death when escape became impossible. The horses that were then pitted against the bull were valuable and thoroughbred animals, easily manageable, though of a bold and unflinching temperament. They were frequently gored, and even tossed, amid the rapturous applause of high-born lords and dames, who had no ruth for the sufferings of man or beast, so long as they themselves were thrilled with inhuman excitement.

The working-classes were naturally brutalised, not only by such hideous spectacles, but also by the extreme poverty and scanty fare to which they were reduced. In Madrid, indeed, they were better off, and might have earned a tolerable livelihood, could they have divested themselves of their besetting sin of laziness. Their great delight was to bask in the sun and discuss public affairs with great vehemence and considerable shrewdness. "You cannot," the countess remarks, "see a joiner, a saddler, or other sort of shopkeeper, without his velvet and satin suit like the King's, with his long rapier and dagger, and his guitar hanging up in his shop." After idling through the week they would work on Sunday, or any other sacred festival, and carry their goods to their employers. "If it is a shoemaker, and he has two apprentices, he takes them both with him, and each of them carry a shoe; nay, if he has three they must all go along with him, and it is with much ado that he will stoop to try the shoes he has made."

It is surely nothing wonderful that such a people should have vanished from the political firmament of Europe, almost as completely as the lost Pleiad from the starry heavens above and around us.

THE VOICES OF THE SEA.

ALONG the shell-wreathed, shining strand
The old and young went to and fro ;
The sinking sun filled all the land
With evening's rich and ruddy glow.
The hot clouds in the amber west
Lit up the sea-kissed shingly bars,
And weary ones who longed for rest
Waited the dawning of the stars.

There came the murmur of the sea
Along the soft sands of the shore ;
'Twas laden with deep mystery,
And music strange was in its roar.
And, as the voices of its waves
Were borne upon the listening ears,
They sang alike of songs and graves,
Of sunny hearts and sacred tears.

There passed a little blue-eyed boy,
As sank the sun on ocean's brim ;
Naught but the sound of endless joy
Across the red waves came to him.
For his bright fancy chased the sun
O'er seas of emerald and gold ;
And the sweet life he had begun,
Its first fair scenes had now unrolled.

With merry heart a maiden came,
The shining, sunlit sands along,
To her the sea bore one dear name
Amidst the burden of its song ;
And the ten thousand glitterings
That stretched across the sunlit bay,
Seemed messengers on golden wings
From her true loved one far away.

There came a man of full fourscore
Into the twilight all alone,
To him the sea broke on the shore
With solemn sway and sullen moan ;
The voices of the bygone years
Came faintly on its sad refrain ;
Yet when he called, mid rising tears,
On friends, they answered not again.

Still sank the sun. Then rose the stars,
And looked down on the cold grey shore ;
Still solemnly the moaning bars
Wailed low their music as of yore.
And some with sad eyes met the night,
To pass its watches all forlorn ;
And some there slept mid visions bright
Till dawned the fragrant, rosy morn.

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART XII.

WHAT a sight met our eyes as we came on deck in the early morning, and found the Sea Mew gently steaming along by Spithead, the narrow waters all bright with sunshine, and studded with countless sails ! It was the time of regattas, and the sea was alive with yachts of all sizes and shapes, among which big ironclads at anchor showed like birds of prey among the fluttering, quickly darting flock. Crowded ferry steamers were wending their way

among the press of sailing craft. The roofs of Ryde were glittering in the morning sunshine, and the long pier stretched towards us as if to tempt us to land on the pleasant green shores. A band in the distance played the part of Circe, but Captain Mac, as Ulysses, held us firmly to our course, and Ryde was left behind, and the wooded slopes of Osborne appeared in view. Everywhere white sails were piled higher and higher on tapering masts, as the gentle breeze raised a curling ripple on the blue waters. Cowes was hardly to be seen for the cloud of sails, and the mouth of the Medina was full of the cobweb-like tracery of spars and rigging. Everything cried out "Stay !" but cried in vain, for the indicator showed "Ahead full speed," and except when some adventurous cutter or schooner with all her spread of canvas thrust herself across our course, full speed ahead continued to be expected from the labouring engines. For Captain Mac had promised Hilda that she should sleep under the roof of home that night, and the prospect of losing his passengers before nightfall stimulated him to unwonted energy.

And so the varied panorama of the coast passes before our eyes, with its white cliffs and grey, its red cliffs and blue ; the coast-line that has no equal in its variety, brightness, and charm in all this hemisphere—that is, when the sun shines as it does to-day, while the shadows of the clouds rest softly on land and sea. And thus we pass along the Solent and out of the narrow neck of water with Hurst Castle threatening us from the mainland with ancient majestic force, while we run close under the guns of the modern forts on the island. And then the pinnacled rocks of the Needles with their tall lighthouse are passed, and we steam across Christchurch Bay with its perplexing tides, where there is high-water four times a day. And then Bournemouth appears in the distance with its dark pine-woods ; and Swanage Bay opens out, while the round-backed limestone hills rise solidly in the background ; and then we stretch out to sea to negotiate the Bill of Portland, the sun flashing messages to us from the upper windows of Weymouth, whence I started to look for Hilda. How long ago is it ? It seems a lifetime since. And we take the flashes from Weymouth as congratulating signals testifying satisfaction that what was begun there is in the way of being brought to a happy conclusion. And

then the broad back of Portland Island shuts out everything else from view; that island with its grand and portentous outline, with its associations of misery and despair entombed in its rock-cut terraces. We run close to the rock, and Hilda shudders as she sees a long line of convicts slouching along under the rifles of their warders. A terrible island that of imprisoned sighs and groans, and yet with a stern grandeur of its own, its cliffs crowned with frowning forts and towers. Now we stand out across Lyme Bay, with its rigid wall of cliffs affording here and there a gap, hollowed out by some plodding little river, where a little town has crept in with a clump of red roofs and a cluster of masts and sails; and then we make Berry Head by Brixham with a fleet of fishing-boats disporting in the sunshine, and look back across Torbay, with its ultra-Protestant memories, to where Torquay rises, glittering from the blue waters, embosomed in wooded hills, with foliage feathering down to the very edge of the sea.

A long summer's day was coming to an end, a perfect and halcyon day of rest and languid enjoyment, and still the coast-line stretched on before us, an unbroken line of cliff and beetling precipice, with Start Point as the farthest headland, showing stern and grim against the orange glow of the setting sun. We were slipping westward, indeed, at a pretty good pace, with no sign of a friendly harbour anywhere near. The man at the wheel had hardly moved a little finger for the last half-hour, and the engines drummed along monotonously, as if they had got well into the way of working, and wanted nobody to drive them now, and, indeed, the engineers had come on deck for a breath of fresh air, and were taking this prolonged breath, tempered with tobacco smoke, in company with the cook and a couple of sailors, in a light-hearted manner. Captain Mac was in his cabin, supposed to be locking over the charts, but in reality, I fancy, indulging in a kind of cat's sleep, when suddenly, as if she had sprung out of the rocks, a huge ocean steamer appeared round a jutting point. A piercing scream from her steam-whistle showed that she had caught sight of us at the same moment. Captain Mac sprang from his cabin, the engineers scuttled downstairs, while the steersman began to haul at his wheel, the natural impulse of man under such circumstances being to port his helm. But,

"Stand your course, John," cried our captain like one demented, and then, "Starboard a little," as we felt the throb of the huge steamer, that seemed to throw a darkness upon us as she came between us and the setting sun. The orders given carried us right athwart the track of the big steamer, and far from slackening speed our captain, as he grasped the handle of the indicator, seemed to want to have it "ahead fuller speed," if such a signal were possible. One could see a bustle on board the big steamer, and a crowding of heads over her bulwarks, and then our little steamer begins to dance in the swell of her as she passes harmlessly astern.

Sundry gold-banded heads, from the bridge of the big steamer, now peered over at us, and expressed uncomplimentary opinions of our gallant captain, who contented himself with burying his head between his shoulders and wriggling half apologetically and half defiantly. And then from the poop-deck we were held in view, and addressed in more or less emphatic chaff, by a crowd of bronzed and bearded faces, with a sprinkling of fallow unbearded ones among them, with here and there a dark ebony face, lighted up with gleaming ivory, or the stolid mahogany visage of some Arab traveller; bright plumaged birds chattered and screamed at us, and a monkey, loose among the rigging, joined in the general confusion of tongues.

"Now," said Captain Mac, approaching us in a deprecating manner, "if ye'd been all cast away ye'd have blamed me."

The probability was, that we should not have been in a position to blame anybody; but the old squire, who had just come on deck, shook his head, and remarked:

"You should have put your helm down, captain—hard down."

"And if I had," rejoined the captain, "where would you have been?—ashore now on a bank of rock. Now, the sailing-rules, and common-sense, moreover, bid me keep out of the way of the other packet, which was on my starboard bow, mark you."

The result justified Captain Mac. It was certainly much pleasanter to be sailing merrily along towards our port than to be stuck on a rocky shelf waiting to be salvaged by a congress of rapacious tugs. The wonder still remains at meeting such a huge craft in these quiet seas, and so close

inshore; but our captain allays the wonder by explaining that no doubt this packet was one of the East African steamers straight from Mozambique and Madagascar, at least as straight as the Cape of Good Hope will allow, with her port of call at Dartmouth, thus bringing the quiet coast of Devon into direct relations with Africa's coral strand.

And now we head up for the northward, straight for the rocks as it seems, but presently the rocks open out as they might do in some Arabian Nights' enchantment, and we pass suddenly from the open sea into the quiet and seclusion of a romantic river gorge. Twilight has suddenly come upon us, and rows of lights are shining from the hill above, where houses rise terrace above terrace, looking over each other's roofs, and the bold headland with its castle and quaint St. Petrox rising above are thrown in clear obscurity against the evening glow. Yachts are floating gently to their moorings, folding their pinions as they come to rest; the sound of oars echoes from the rocks, and the ferry steamer is taking her last trip across the harbour. All this is in wonderful contrast to garish Trouville. The quiet old-world town, not much altered in general aspect since the Crusaders sailed thence for the Holy Wars; the stiff and solemn deportment of the natives, seamen, fishermen, and coastguardsmen, their slow soft way of talking, and energetic way of working; all are widely different to affairs on the other side of the Channel.

But we have no time to lose if we mean to reach Combe Chudleigh to-night. The tide is making up the river, and a gentle sea breeze is rippling the tranquil cove, and a boat is lowered from the yacht, and with a sprit-sail, and the occasional help of a couple of seamen at the oars, we sail forth towards Totnes. Hilda sits at the tiller, she knows every wind and turn of the beautiful stream, which in the soft gloaming recalls some tropical river with its vegetation so luxuriant that it seems here and there as if we must force a passage through the foliage, until another reach opens out like a lake, all embowered in trees.

But it is quite dark when we reach the little cove which opens out towards Combe Chudleigh, and the boat is made safe in the half-ruinous boathouse, and the sailors are sent off to make themselves comfortable for the night in the village ale-house. The village is still wide awake, and we can

hear the harvest-men singing over their cups after a long day's toil. And presently as we walk slowly up towards the house we hear the bells of the village church tolling one after the other, and then breaking out suddenly into a merry peal. Hilda clutched my arm nervously.

"Why should they be ringing the bells to-night?" she asked. "It can't be for our coming back. Is it possible Mr. Chancellor has come down to look at his new purchase?"

Sure enough when we reached the hall door we found a fly standing there that had just come over from the station. But Mrs. Murch was in the doorway ready to receive us. She had been told to expect us any day, and everything was in readiness—the small suite of rooms in the west wing were all prepared for our habitation. But who was the other arrival? Not Mr. Chancellor indeed, but a gentleman connected with him, a certain Mr. Wyvern, with a solicitor and a surveyor from London. They had been looking over the timber and everything in the house, and now they were hard at work writing and calculating in the library.

"Oh, I wish I hadn't come," sobbed Hilda, "to hear of strangers appraising the old timber, and putting a price on the family pictures! I knew it would come to this, but the reality is too appalling, and our people ring the bells for it!"

"Well, that shall be put a stop to anyhow," said Mrs. Murch grimly, and a small boy was dispatched to the village to give notice to the ringers. But presently the youth came back grinning from ear to ear.

"It warn't for he," with a pantomimic indication by a thumb over his shoulder of some contemptible person—presumably Mr. Chancellor; "it warn't for he, but for young miss, and Master Frank, her sweetheart, that the bells were set a ringing, and they warn't going to stop—no, not if anybody was to offer 'em a suv'reign first."

Here was joy for Hilda; her people had not forgotten her, they had not gone over to the enemy! After all this it would be more of a trial than ever to leave the place. The old squire, strange to say, did not seem to care a bit about the home of his ancestors. He grumbled that there was no evening paper—he grumbled at poor Mrs. Murch's honest but misguided attempt to send up an appetising repast. Everything was much more comfortable in

Westbourne Terrace, and even on board the Sea Mew things were better arranged. And certainly the old hall struck one as uncommonly dreary. A thin fine rain had come on, a soft misty cloak enveloping everything. Hilda went to bed with a headache, and the old squire retired to the society of a tub of hot water and a basin of gruel.

In a general way, when some unavoidable evening engagement takes you out, an overpowering desire for rest takes possession of the soul. In the same way, when there is nothing else in the world to do, the idea of going to bed and trying to sleep becomes absolutely repulsive. And then I came to know that other people in the house were passing their time in a more amusing way. The professional people from London had been invited to stay the night and make themselves comfortable in the old hall, and they seemed to be quite equal to the occasion. A pleasant smell of tobacco took away the rawness of the air, and now and then a gentle waft of laughter gave evidence that some quiet joke had been perpetrated or good story told. At last, unable to endure the solitude of the place any longer, I got Mrs. Murch to take in to these merry people an offer on my part to join their society, and I soon made a fourth among them. At first, of course, my presence acted as a wet blanket; the flow of talk and anecdotes was checked. But then I was a fourth, and the fact suggested whist, and whist we played into the small hours. The London solicitor and myself were partners, and we punished Wyvern and the surveyor so handsomely that my partner seemed charmed with my prowess. As dawn had now broken we took a turn round the grounds to admire the different points of view, and watch the vapours curling over the river, and floating away to the distant sea.

My new friend was well up in all the news of the day, and not at all reticent. He knew all about the breaking off of John Chancellor's engagement, and was able to tell me that so little had Hilda's former lover taken his loss to heart, that he was already engaged to marry the Hon. Miss Wyvern, an alliance which would bring him most distinguished connections. The Wyverns were certainly poor and somewhat rapacious; but still their political influence would be of immense advantage to a man in John Chancellor's position. And to bind the families more firmly

together, it was proposed that young Wyvern should marry Chancellor's sister.

I wondered what Tom would think of this, for he certainly was wonderfully taken with Miss Chancellor. And then I objected that as the Wyverns were poor, surely it would hardly be a good match for the youth, seeing that Miss Chancellor could not have much.

"Oh, I beg your pardon there," said my friend the lawyer. "She has twenty thousand pounds. John Chancellor was not the sole architect of his fortunes. There was a cousin who made a great fortune, and took up John Chancellor, and this cousin left his sister, Fanny by name, the score of thousands."

Another item of information I drew from my new friend. John Chancellor's capital was mostly locked up in commercial enterprises, and he had not sufficient money lying idle to pay for the Chudleigh estate. So that he proposed to borrow his sister's twenty thousand from her trustees, and the lawyer and surveyor had come down to value the security. They were tolerably well satisfied, it seemed; but as the young lady had just come of age, it would be necessary to consult her on the matter. The purchase was to be completed in the following week, and in the meantime the lawyer would have to run over to Trouville to obtain Miss Chancellor's signature and assent.

And if, for any reason, the twenty thousand pounds were not forthcoming? Well, in that case, Mr. Chancellor would have a great difficulty in completing the purchase—in fact, perhaps he would have to declare off altogether. And that would be a pity, for, as it was, the purchase-money would pay all mortgages, and leave a few thousands over for the old squire; whereas, with a forced sale, land being just now heavy in the market, perhaps he would get nothing at all.

Upon this I offered to take the lawyer with the rest of us in the Sea Mew and land him at his destination at Trouville, and Banks, as our friend was called, accepted the offer with much pleasure. I doubt if he would have shown such alacrity if he had divined the notion which was running in my head, and which was to keep him afloat till the day for ratifying the sale of Combe Chudleigh had passed, and so to give myself a chance of getting hold of the property.

As it happened, this buccaneering plan was never carried out, for next morning

came a telegram from Tom demanding our congratulations. Fanny had promised to be his; and so on. We determined, Hilda and I, to carry our congratulations in person, and so that afternoon we dropped down the river with the tide, and found ourselves once more on board the *Sea Mew*, our party increased by the presence of the lawyer, to the great disgust, I fancy, of Captain Mac, who had been looking forward to a week of solitary musing in harbour. This time we made a direct course from point to point, and saw no land after leaving behind the red cliffs of old Devon, till we made Cape la Hève and the chalky downs about the mouth of the Seine. Trouville was still more bright and gay, and a good deal more crowded than when we left. Tom and his sweet-heart were on the pier to watch us in. Tom had been busy enough since we left. In addition to winning his bride, he had won a trotting-match against an American with Contango at the Deauville races. The count had gone away to Vichy to drink the waters and to recover from the effects of his immersion. But Mr. Banks had his journey for nothing, except the pleasure of the cruise. For Miss Chancellor, when she heard how matters stood, firmly refused to have anything to do with the Combe Chudleigh property. And so Mr. Banks took back with him an offer to let the whole business of the purchase be cancelled, returning the money already paid, which otherwise might be forfeited.

While we are waiting for Mr. Chancellor's reply, to keep the *Sea Mew* employed—a ravenous kind of bird that in the way of coals, and stores, and harbour-charges devours as much as any of the celebrated sea-monsters of ancient days—to keep her employed and Captain Mac from too much metaphysics, we determine upon a run up the Seine, starting with the first of the flood-tide. To catch the tide we must lay up for the night in Havre, where we get a berth alongside the Southampton steamer (into which we ship poor Contango, who is to travel from Southampton to Devonshire by easy stages), and then in the early morning the *Sea Mew* slips out just in the wake of the little steamer Chamois, which makes the voyage to Rouen every other day.

The tide is hardly stirring as we leave the harbour, but before we are in mid-stream it is rushing in with tremendous power, racing over the flat sand-banks, and

bending the tall poles that mark out the channel. The Chamois has to call for passengers at Honfleur, on the other side of the estuary, and so we get the start of her, and race along at the very head of the flood. We have got a pilot on board, a jolly old fellow, who is always cracking jokes with Tom—dimly understood on either side, but none the less relished. And, indeed, the navigation at the mouth of the Seine, what with shifting sand-banks and the tide, that runs like a mill-race, requires the skill of a pilot who can study the tides and the channels from day to day. A noble river, too, is the Seine from the very mouth—with no low country of flats and marshes to pass through, and amphibious regions, half-sea and half-river, but running in a noble well-defined valley up to, or rather down to, the junction with the sea.

Hardly is the channel fairly entered when the English-looking spire of Harfleur appears under the distant hills—the Harfleur of Henry the Fifth, the once girded Harfleur, the royal port and great mart of the Seine, but now left high and dry in a little nook by the lazy river Lézarde. And then come the towers of Tancarville rising proudly on their bold headland, while the hills and cliffs on either side approach as if this were once the outlet of a mighty lake that filled up the whole valley above. Then we hurry past Quillebeuf, a neat and taking little town, drawn up on its strongly-built quay, and from Quillebeuf, the river narrowing rapidly, the tide rises suddenly in a huge wave, a bore that stretches from bank to bank, dashing in surf along the banks on either side, while foaming breakers hurry along in its wake. Just in the rear of these troubled waters the *Sea Mew* drives along with all the speed that Captain Mac and his engineers can get out of her. There is a pleasant breeze too from the west, and the *Sea Mew* stretches out her canvas, and with sail and steam bids fair to outpace the tide, and the little flotilla that is urging on behind.

Everywhere along the banks of the river we hear the cry, "*Le flôt, le flôt,*" in a soft melancholy cadence, carried from mouth to mouth, a warning cry that has echoed along these banks no doubt for countless generations, and was heard by the men in Cæsar's galleys, and by the fierce Northmen as they followed the tide with sail and oar on their mission of plunder and destruction. Then as the river takes a sudden bend to

the north we see a vast forest stretching to the right, while on the other bank great white cliffs rise behind a margin of verdant prairie. Yonder is Villequier, a pleasant village with a venerable church, and a little quay, with an inn looking over it, where the pilots sit, we are told, playing picquet all day long, and waiting for a turn; and here we drop our jolly old pilot, and take in another with his belongings all packed up in a round bag, whose business it is to take the ship to Rouen.

Candebec now appears on our left, brightest of little towns, with its broad quay, and avenues of trees, and comfortable old-fashioned houses, aligned in the rear with gardens and green shrubberies, and here there is a signal-mast that shows the depth of water on the bar farther on, the signal man stringing up one ball after another as the tidal wave changes the state of affairs all of a sudden from dead low water to nearly full tide. And here we come upon a railway train that races with us and with the tide for a while, but leaves us as we take another great bend to the south, and so come upon the forest again, which occupies the whole peninsula; and then we see the strange twin towers of Jumièges, with a film only of the central tower remaining—Jumièges that was once the nursery of English prelates, with its traditions that stretch back to the very infancy of the Christian faith.

And then there is another great bend of the river, with stupendous chalk cliffs, first on one side and then on the other, rising sheer from the margin of the stream on one hand, and on the other a stretch of green prairie, with tall poplars rising in long lines. And above the level of the water meadows, the valley is one vast orchard, a perfect garden of the Hesperides, all now bright with golden fruit. At Duclair, which lies at the top of the bend—another pleasant-looking little town, with its quay, and its little steam ferry-boat shooting to and fro, its white houses with their green persiennes, and a snug-looking hotel overlooking the quay—at Duclair there are English steamers loading up with fruit, conical baskets of plums and the first of the apples. The huge cliffs that rise above the town are quarried and excavated into great caverns, and farther on the chalk assumes all kinds of fantastic shapes of feudal castles and grey, time-worn towers.

From this point the hills are all covered with forest, where the deer and the wild boar can roam up to the very gates of Rouen, and where William the Conqueror would find himself still very much at home, the ancient art of *vénérerie* having changed but little since his days.

At the bottom of the bend we come to La Bouille, a nice little place lying in the very elbow of the river, with an hotel which has a great verandah overlooking the river, where it is pleasant to sit and watch the ships coming up with the tide. By crossing a narrow isthmus here, you cut off a bend of the river of some twenty-four miles, and here when Henry the Fifth was besieging Rouen he dragged his ships across, so as to shut in the ships of Rouen on both sides. Close by is a grand and ancient earthwork known as the Château of Robert le Diable, where there was a fierce encounter during the Prussian war. And at La Bouille our captain proposes to anchor the ship, to avoid the delays of a crowded port, and also no doubt to give him an interval of quiet reflection, as from this point numerous steamers ply to Rouen, which is just at the top of the bend.

And so we finish our course on one of the river steamers, a pleasant sail under wood-crowned heights, with green islands dotting the river, and so take a rapid glance at Rouen, familiar to most of us, and then drive across the neck of the isthmus to Duclair, for the sake of the magnificent view of the city of Rouen, and its network of valleys, from the heights. At Duclair the Sea Mew picks us up again, and we descend the river in a more leisurely way, anchoring again at Candebec to explore the picturesque old town and admire the charming panoramic views from its wooded heights, and then towards morning, when the points of flame on headlands and capes are just beginning to die away in the soft light of dawn, we double Cap de la Hève, and boldly steer out again to sea, this time with our prow directed straight for the South Foreland.

At first we skirt the long wall of chalk cliff—the ruddy tinge of Cap de la Hève giving place to the pure white of the cliffs above Etretât, where we can make out with our glasses the bathing-cabins on the beach, and monsieur, madame, and bébé taking their early morning swim. And then Fécamp opens out its narrow cleft in the great chalk escarpment, and we work into mid-channel and lose sight of land altogether.

As evening draws on the coast-line of England becomes visible, and presently the bright electric lights of the South Foreland flash out upon us. At the sight, the world on board, hitherto inclined to silence, and dozing in solitary corners, revives and becomes sociable and cheerful.

"It is a very comforting reflection," Mrs. Bacon remarks, "that everything should have gone off so well." Her nephew John and her niece Fanny so likely to be so well allied, and that poor count not likely to suffer from the effects of his ducking, and even the young lady in spangles able to ride a bare-backed horse already, and jump through a couple of hoops—this according to Mr. Courtney's account, who kept up a correspondence with Zamora's employer—all these things the good lady found it pleasant to think of.

Finally, Mrs. Bacon asked of Hilda confidentially, but doubtfully:

"Are you satisfied, my dear?"

"Perfectly," replied Hilda with a proud smile. "I have got my Frank, and I don't want anything more."

And so as night comes on we gather on the poop, while lights flash upon us out of the gloom from the fleet of fishing-boats that are silently gathering the harvest of the deep. Dover Castle is faintly visible against the evening glow, and by-and-by Ramsgate shines out gaily with its rows of diamond lights. Before midnight there is a dark shore line on either hand, and shore-lights on each side twinkle forth cheerily, and presently we glide softly to our moorings off Gravesend.

Next morning Hilda and I pay a visit to our friendly solicitor in Bedford Row, who receives us most cordially. Everything is going on well. John Chancellor, finding a difficulty in getting together the purchase money for Combe Chudleigh, and having other objects in view, is quite ready to give up his bargain, and by paying off and consolidating the mortgages, we can secure a sufficient income for the old squire—quite enough anyhow for the modest establishment in Westbourne Terrace, which is the limit of the old man's desires. And Hilda and I are to occupy Combe Chudleigh as soon as the wedding comes off, while Redmond is to try his fortunes and develop his talent for cattle-dealing at the Antipodes.

We are going to sell the Sea Mew as too expensive, and purchase a nice little sailing craft, in which we hope to make many another cruise Along the Silver Streak.

DAVOS AM PLATZ.

THE great conflict among doctors at the present time is whether a warm climate or a cold climate is better for diseases of the chest. For those who have the latter opinion the Alpine mountain cure is the great resource, and in Switzerland Davos has a great reputation both summer and winter, though in the summer most patients go higher up in the Engadine:

I have lately been spending a little time at Davos. According to the new fashionable theory, consumption is caused by the living germs, the bacteria, and in this cold rarified air the germs will not be generated, or, if generated, will be destroyed.

Davos am Platz, so called to distinguish it from Davos-Dörfl, a mile and a half off, is the favourite health resort for the winter. The two places are precisely alike, except, perhaps, that Davos-Dörfl is a trifle colder and a trifle cheaper. The resort of patients to Davos in the winter is great, greater even than that of summer tourists in the holiday season of the year. Some people are beginning to apprehend that the influx of patients is too great. The valley of the Landwasser is of very limited length and breadth, and the presence of a large population would go far to destroy the healthy characteristics of the place. The point of danger is, however, far distant, and most visitors may console themselves with the reflection that the healthiness of the place will last their time.

Davos was originally discovered about seventeen years ago by a German physician and a friend, who, with difficulty, found an abode in the solitary hotel which the place then possessed. The doctor was suffering from lung-disease, and being marvellously cured, he drew public attention in Germany to the merits of a cold climate in pulmonary disease. In Germany the new idea received eager discussion and welcome. Davos Platz became essentially a German watering-place, and to the present day it retains this characteristic, though the English are now first, or at least a good second. The place is now made up of a number of hotels and pensions. The peculiarity of the place is that everybody has been very ill, and is now getting rather better. It is claimed that some eighty per cent. of the visitors receive decided benefit. The whole population, more or less, consists of patients. The very hotel-keepers came here originally for their health. The small shopkeepers are poor

industrious people, who being unable to support the expense of living here as visitors, have opened houses of business to enable them to make the two ends meet. I know that there are many patients who can live in comfort at Davos, and cannot live anywhere else at all. If you get acclimatised to Davos, you must henceforth always breathe mountain air under similar conditions.

The climate of Davos is one of extraordinary and violent contrasts. In winter it is often like summer, and the summer is often like winter. I am writing at the end of June, and the snow is falling and the wind howling through the valley. In these high Alpine districts we are two or three months behind the season. There is a brilliant variety of flowers, but the wild strawberry-blossoms are hardly come yet. The advocates of Davos claim for it a health-giving climate all the year round, except, perhaps, May and the first half of June. In the summer the cold climate is supposed to invigorate and brace the patient for the endurance of an English winter. It is in the winter, however, that we have the large resident population of health-seekers.

The world of Davos is a white world for seven months. There are constant falls of snow—light, dry, feathery snow, which you shake off, and which does not make you feel at all wet. In the old Rathhaus there are, or were till lately, thirty wolves' heads set up, and one of the prettiest spots in the neighbourhood is called Wolfgang, so called because it was a haunt of wolves, trooping from valley to valley. Bears are brought in occasionally, for which a large reward is given. One of the hotels, a year or two ago, gave bear for dinner on Christmas Day. Both fishing and shooting are attainable, but they are placed under costly restraints.

The most extraordinary thing about a Davos winter is, that while the whole country is under snow, the weather is often extremely hot. The sun beats down powerfully, undimmed by any intervening moisture in the air. Ladies, who are delicate invalids, bring out their parasols, sunshades, and broad garden-hats. They saunter along the promenade, or lie in hammocks in the woods, reading the newspapers and novels, which come with much regularity from England. The doctor will even recommend moonlight walks.

There are plenty of winter amusements.

Skating ranks first. At Davos-Dürfl there is a lovely little lake, about three miles in circumference, very pleasant for picnics in the summer, and for rinking in the winter. There are two rinks in the town or village itself. The Canadian game of tobogganing is the great amusement of Davos. The joke consists in dashing down a steep slope in a sledge propelled by your own weight. The Alpine passes afford capital ground for this kind of amusement. Even if an invalid tumbles into the snow he does not mind, for the snow of the country is quite unlike other snow.

The winter population of Davos, from England alone, is from two to three hundred, chiefly staying at the inns. People are thrown into close intimacy, and there is a great deal of pleasant society. One can hardly realise, looking at the tanned faces and brilliant eyes, that the great majority of the company are chronic sufferers from phthisis. The fact afterwards becomes sadly significant, and it is impossible to watch the cases without sympathy and interest.

In May the winter invalids go away, and the summer visitors do not arrive till the end of June or July. Many of them return to England. Many more go to the Upper Engadine, for a still greater height, a still keener air, and find grand quarters at such places as Samaden, Pontresina, St. Moritz, and Silvaplana.

Davos is well situated for excursions. It has several lateral valleys, where you may trace the stream through the waterfalls up the mountains. On either side of the valley there are easy paths cut through the pine-woods, from which you emerge into upper valleys, where you may always find bread and milk in the chalets, and fronting them are the higher Alps, wearing their snows. A number of Alpine passes converge on the Davos Valley, the more important of them being traversed by diligences over good roads. For those who are not members of the Alpine Club, or otherwise mighty mountaineers, these mountain roads are easy and delightful travelling. They are often much more beautiful than the short cuts which the guides will show you. You are on the line of hotels and vehicles, where you can always get rest, refreshments, or a lift. It is easy to descend to the margin of the stream, to hunt the waterfalls, to climb to a vantage point of view. From the hospice on the Flüela Pass, whither we may take

the post-diligence, there is the easy ascent to the glacier-girt Schwarzhorn. On the Landwasser Pass there is the ascent of the Schiahorn, and also the beautifully vaulted Silvretta glacier. Near the former the Alpine Club has built a hut. In the neighbourhood of the passes there are various little spas and watering-places whose mineral springs are devoutly believed in by their visitants, and which give ample opportunities to travellers for the study of both Nature and human nature. A local guide-book enumerates some twenty or thirty distinct expeditions.

There has been a great deal of discussion about the drainage of Davos, which is of course a most important matter. In the three English hotels the drainage seems to be very good, and in the town generally there have been great improvements. There is an idea of canalising the Landwasser, which at times overflows and converts the meadows into a marshy swamp.

It is to be regretted that the medical value of Davos, as a sanatorium in chest cases, has never been ascertained with any approach to exactness. It would be a good thing if some English doctor would carefully tabulate the cases and give the world the results of his experience. A number of years ago the Committee of the Brompton Hospital for Consumption, sent out a set of patients to test the climate of Madeira. Why should not the Committee send out some selected cases to Davos next winter? The conflict of opinion between warm and cold climates ought to be settled. If the Davos theory is correct, a good deal of medical practice will have to be revolutionised.

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER XII.

"AT the Central Criminal Court, before Chief Justice Braby, Ernest Pentreath, captain in Her Majesty's —th regiment, was brought up on a charge of manslaughter, for shooting Major James Hollis, late of the same regiment, with a pistol."

So, in brief, read the announcement published in a score of newspapers, repeated on many scores of posters, and read by many more scores of curious or idle people, with much pleasure at the prospect of something rather more interesting than the ordinary cases of vulgar commonplace

murder among the lower orders; read also, with such shrinking, such mental anguish and shame, by the few most nearly connected with the prisoner in question, as those idle ones would hardly care to know, even if they had the power to do so.

The three weeks which were to elapse between the magistrate's examination and the next sittings at the Old Bailey were over. Christmas, the saddest, woofullest Christmas that had ever dawned on the little household at Kew, had come and gone. It was now the second week in January, and in all this time no trace of Hetty had been discovered, and no further evidence in support of Captain Pentreath's statement had come to light.

It was not that time or trouble had been spared in the search for either. Mr. Lorton, indeed, had hardly left a stone unturned in the energy of his quest after corroborative evidence for the defence; but the results were so slight as scarcely to repay him for his trouble, while the vicar, though more successful at the beginning of his enquiries, was doomed to double disappointment by finding them come to a dead lock almost at the very outset.

It was easy enough to track his missing sweetheart to Brixton. That tear-blotted little letter of hers, combined with his aunt's information about the cousin, had given him the right clue; and a very little research among South London directories further supplied him with the address, Number Ten, Paradise Villas, in conjunction with the name he wanted. Then, too, the ticket-clerk at Kew was able to fix the train by which Hetty had travelled—having taken particular notice of her, and wondered what could take the young lady, whom he knew by sight, to town at such an untimely hour of a winter's morning—so that, had Mrs. White been really living in the villa aforementioned, there is little doubt that, despite Hetty's anxiety to keep the place of her destination a secret, the vicar would have descended on her within little more than twenty-four hours after her flight. His disappointment, therefore, at being confronted with an empty house covered with notices "To Let," may be better imagined than described, and nearly equalled that of poor Hetty herself.

In vain he made enquiries about the Whites, hoping that in finding them he should also find her in their company. These enquiries only proved the truth of that well-known saying, that a man may live three years in London without knowing

the name of his next-door neighbour, or being known by sight to his opposite one. All that the other denizens of Paradise Villas could tell him of the Whites was that they were a youngish couple, and very quiet; that they kept to themselves, and didn't seem to have any acquaintances in the neighbourhood; that the man looked like a clerk and went into town every day, and that the woman did her marketing herself, and brought home the provisions in a basket, instead of having the tradespeople call. In addition to all this the lady at Number Twelve added the one piece of information which was of interest to him—namely, that he was not the only person who wanted to know what had become of the people next door, for no farther back than yesterday a young woman had driven up in a cab, and had knocked and rung, and seemed in a dreadful state of mind at finding the house empty. But she had said she was a relation, and as the good lady in question did remember to have heard tell that Mrs. White came from India, where all her folks were, maybe the young party had just arrived from there too; and, if so, no wonder she turned so white—which a sheet was nothing to it!—and looked as if she should faint at finding her relatives were gone, and that no one could tell her anything of them. Did the lady kindly imparting this information know what had become of the young woman in question? No, the lady didn't, barring that she had walked away, having dismissed her cab first, and that she looked so frightened and miserable like—for all she was a pretty little creature too—that she, the speaker, had felt quite sorry for her.

How the vicar felt need not be told. He too remembered that in speaking of her childish days Hetty had referred to an aunt at Deal, who had afterwards returned to India; and this, in conjunction with what the woman told him respecting Mrs. White's people, and with his own entire ignorance of the very existence of the Uxbridge Road Thompsons, filled him with an amount of distress and anxiety respecting her, which it needed no description of the poor child's scared and unhappy face to intensify.

As time went on, that anxiety became increased a thousand-fold rather than lessened, for, try as he might, he could obtain no further clue, no hint, even, as to the whereabouts of the missing girl. If she had melted into the ground on

turning the corner from Paradise Villas she could not have more utterly disappeared, and never before had he realised how fatally easy such disappearances are made by the very hugeness and crowding of this great metropolis, where a person has only, as it were, to walk out of his own house and vanish straightway from all sight and ken of everyone connected with him.

He advertised, of course, and by-and-by he even went so far as to employ a detective on his own account; but, with regard to the advertisement, he was greatly hampered by the necessity of diverting any chance of scandal from Hetty's name, or of causing her disappearance to seem like an elopement to the people in the neighbourhood. For this reason the notices had perforce to be couched in so guarded a form that they were of little use in catching the eye of the person for whom they were designed, even had she been capable of reading newspapers or anything else at that time; while, owing to the detective's instructions leading him to chiefly concentrate his attention on the south side of London, while poor little Hetty's wandering feet had early carried her across the river and travelled westward, his researches proved, if anything, even more futile.

But though the vicar was thus occupied on a seemingly hopeless quest—hunting high and low, visiting even workhouse infirmaries and mortuaries in the search for his lost sweetheart, and haunted in all places and at all hours by the vision of the little frightened figure, with its white unhappy face, wandering homeless and penniless among the thousand pitfalls and horrors of the London streets—it must not be supposed that he neglected either his parish, or the widowed and bereaved woman who had never needed his kindness and services more sorely.

It was an unhealthy season, with much rain and little bracing frost and cold, so that the vicar was in more than usual request among his sick and poor parishioners; but if some of these missed Hester's sunshiny ministrations on their own account, they found no additional cause for doing so in any slackness on their clergyman's part, or for guessing how acutely he on his side missed her too.

Some among them, indeed, said that "Parson had never worked harder or seemed more kindly and sympathising like with them," and even Mrs. Pentreath felt

inclined at times to forget that her nephew had any special interest in the girl whose loss she herself bemoaned so frequently, or any cause for resentment against the young man to whose defence and encouragement he devoted so many willing if fruitless hours.

Ernest, however, took the matter differently. Since his committal for trial he had lost all his bravery and defiance, and had become even more depressed than his circumstances, bad as they were, seemed to warrant; saying openly that if it were not for his mother he had almost rather the charge had been for murder instead of manslaughter, as then it would be all over with him the sooner, and scoffing with dreary cynicism at the efforts to hunt up evidence in his favour when, as he said, none such was forthcoming.

"If those railway people wouldn't recognise me in the beginning they aren't likely to do so now, such a haggard wretch as I've grown in these weeks," he said bitterly. "And as for the home folks, what's the use of making them perjure themselves for me? Don't I tell you I didn't want them to know I was in the house? Why, I was so sore and savage that when I got to the door I had ten minds not to go in at all, and it was only the remembering that my mother and Hetty were out, and that, therefore, I couldn't be bothered with their questions and small-talk, that made me do so. A latch-key isn't a noisy thing, and our hall is carpeted like a drawing-room. I don't suppose for a moment that the servants heard me, and I was glad they didn't at the time, for I couldn't stay. The whole cursed affair was next door to ruin for me in any case; but I thought if I could manage to coax or bully Hollis into some sort of apology and retraction before it had time to get abroad, I shouldn't be obliged to leave the service at any rate. As things are at present, I'd just as soon be hung as not, and I wish you'd tell my people not to bother about me. I suppose the poor mother—God help her!—can't avoid doing so; but after all, my cousin George will be a much better son to her than I've been. She spoils me."

"Your cousin is in too much trouble himself to be very cheering for her at present; though I must say he bears up under it in a very manly way," said Mr. Lorton. "I suppose you know that the young lady he was engaged to has disappeared?"

"The young lady! Who? Not——"

"The one who lived with your mother—Miss Mavors."

"Hetty Mavors! But—good God! what do you mean? Disappeared! I don't understand you."

The lawyer told him very quietly the facts of the case as he had heard them himself, and certainly the effect upon Ernest was startling. He could hardly rest until the next visit from his cousin, and, when the latter came, plied him with such eager questions that George Hamilton was almost compelled to tell him the whole story.

Briefly as he did it, however, and without comment, there was something in the very intensity of his self-repression which told its own story of what his feelings were on the subject, and Ernest struck his hand against the prison grating and groaned in late and unavailing remorse.

"It was all my doing," he said, "every bit. The poor child never gave me a scrap of encouragement after the mother showed she didn't like it. It was I who wouldn't let her alone; but I thought she really did like me in her heart, and of course it never entered my head that she could be in love with you."

"Of course not," said the vicar dryly, and was too generous to add more. It was no time for rebuking the egotism which had become second nature in the man before him.

"It was her telling me so, and that she had never cared a hang for me, that riled me. A man doesn't like to feel he has been making a fool of himself; and when I had hoodwinked the mother and got up before daylight on a beastly winter's morning just for the sake of meeting a girl and walking home with her, I did think she'd have been at least flattered and grateful instead of ordering me off as if I'd been a chimney-sweep. All the same I oughtn't to have bullied the child and behaved like a coarse brute to her; and I did—I own it. I wonder she didn't tell you."

"So do I," said the vicar. His face had flushed a little, and the fingers of his right hand were clenched tightly into the palm; but he kept his self-command.

"She did threaten to complain to the mother. It was that that made me so mad; but I suppose, after all, she was too kind-hearted to do it when she heard I was in this trouble."

"I suppose so, but by your leave, Ernest,

my aunt must know the whole truth of this matter now."

"As soon as you like. You can tell her her own over-suspiciousness was at the bottom of the whole business, and that I'll forgive her for it as soon as I can forgive myself. I wonder, though—upon my soul, George, I do—that you can speak to either of us while you don't even know where she is."

The vicar drew a long breath. "We won't discuss that now," he said quietly; and so went away. With all his efforts at charity and self-control it was rather difficult to maintain either at that moment.

And now the day for the trial had come: a raw, bleak day, with occasional gleams of sunlight, pale and wintry as all else, piercing the heavy slaty masses of clouds which rolled up from the north-west, and casting a strange white gleam down on the streets where shivering people passed and re-passed, hurrying for the sake of warmth, and drawing closer round them the garments they wore—furs or rags, fustian or broad-cloth—in an attempt to keep out the bitter wind which swept round every corner and made little whirlwinds in the centre of every crossing.

But if it was bleak and dreary in the street, where the sunbeams had full play, it was bleaker and drearier still in the largest of the courts of the Old Bailey where the case was to be tried, and where not even those fitful sun rays could avail to brighten the ghastly dinginess of the whitewashed walls, the faded red canopy with its golden blazonings over the judge's seat, or the greasy blackened deal of the desks and benches; still less that grim railed-off place on which every eye of all those gathered there would be concentrated throughout the day—the prisoner's dock.

The case had already begun. The judge, a solemn ponderous-looking man, whose severe glance seemed in itself to forbode no good to the accused, was seated on the bench, with, beside him, the sheriff, gorgeous in black velvet and glittering chain; and beyond, a group of stylishly-dressed people, elegant women with fans and smelling-bottles, and languid fashionable men, some of them so-called "friends" of the Pentreaths, but brought to the seats awarded them on the bench by just the same vulgar curiosity, the same thirst for excitement, as that moving the lowest of the general public who filled

the high gallery opposite and pressed forward with unwashed faces and greedy eyes to get a glimpse of the tall, slight young fellow with the pale face and fair moustache, who stood there with head erect and folded arms, more like a soldier on parade than a prisoner standing forth for trial in a felon's dock.

But though he was trying to carry it off well, and though he succeeded to the admiration of those who were watching him, it was a difficult task; and, despite all his efforts, his glance would wander from the judge's table, on which he had first fixed it, to the counsel for the prosecution, already launched upon his opening speech, and the close-packed rows of barristers' wigs behind and on either side of him, with, prominent among them, his own counsel, Sir James Haycroft, leaning back with half-closed eyes, as though too languid to be even kept awake by his opponent's eloquence; to the jury on whose judgment—or want of it—his whole fate was to depend; and to that other row of privileged faces up there behind the barristers, among which were certain of Major Hollis's relations and friends and the Guelder Lodge servants, with, at the extreme end, his cousin George Hamilton, conspicuous by his Roman collar and clerical dress, no less than by the grave intensity of his expression as he stood immediately behind, and as though supporting, an elderly lady habited in deep mourning and with head bowed so low that only the white hair and piteously wrinkled brow were visible even to those nearest to her.

Mrs. Pentreath had persisted in being present; but the sight of her was too much for her son. His lip quivered, and his face, which had gradually flushed to fever-heat under the opposing counsel's lofty and impassioned denunciation, turned as white as death. He looked away again directly.

The speech for the Crown was coming to an end at last. In stern and scathing language the learned serjeant had drawn a brief sketch of the prisoner's previous life, adverting to the general looseness of his habits, the want of honour conspicuous even in his vices, and the continued and unbridled indulgence in his passions; all leading up to and preparing the minds of the audience for that disgraceful scene at the club, where, as the serjeant expressed it, "one honourable man, strong in the feelings of a soldier and a gentleman, had

stood boldly forth in defence of the sanctity of home-life against the wanton boastings of a libertine." Then, after recounting the threats used by Captain Pentreath in passing through the club hall—threats as to which, he observed, nearly a dozen witnesses could testify—he had gone on to the discovery by the landlady of poor Major Hollis's body, and of her encounter in the passage with the prisoner, whose subsequent recognition by Colonel Patterson, together with the words used by that officer, had led to his arrest and detention for the crime which only a few hours previously he had sworn, and repeatedly sworn, to commit.

"And who among you, gentlemen," cried the learned serjeant, his voice rising to almost indignant appeal, "will dare, after such evidence, to say that he did not commit it, but rather that, despising the entreaties of his friend, who, as will be shown you, endeavoured, but in vain, to induce him to go home and think no more of the slight he had received, he proceeded to Albion Street, where Major Hollis resided, and then and there deliberately provoked another quarrel, ending in the fatal manner I have described? Gentlemen, I do not say that the prisoner entered the house, having in his mind a fixed intention to bring about that end. Far be it from me to exaggerate in any way the guilt of one whose criminality, as you will soon see, has already been so amply established, or to lend any additional blackness to a case which the prisoner, if he have any feelings left, must, however it terminates, deplore to the end of his life—a life which, had this charge been urged in a more vindictive spirit, might have found a fearful and ignominious termination almost at its very outset. But we have to look at facts, at the nature of the people concerned in them, and at the circumstances connected with them; and when we review these, when we see this young man challenging and threatening to shoot his brother-officer, besides uttering other vengeful denunciations against him for an insult which, however well deserved, would, unless retracted, go far to ruin his subsequent career in the service to which he belonged; when we hear him declaring that that insult must be retracted or paid for in the life-blood of the man who had inflicted it upon him; and when, a couple of hours afterwards, we find that very man lying dead in his own parlour, shot through the head and weltering in his gore; when

we see the pistol on the table, the open pistol-case, the absence of any sign of robbery or other disturbance suggesting the presence of a stranger; more than all, when we find actually present on the spot, detected, indeed, in the very act of escaping, and in such a state of terror and agitation as to be almost incapable of answering or giving any account of himself whatever, the very individual of whom we have been speaking, what can we, and, gentlemen of the jury, what must we think but that he, and no other person, committed the deed for which he now stands before you? True, no weapon was found upon his person. True, those that were found have since been proved to belong to the deceased, facts which are extremely fortunate for the prisoner in bearing out the merciful assumption of the prosecution that the fatal affair was the result of a duel, and not a cowardly and revengeful murder. But even in countries where duelling has been practically legalised as it never has been in this, these sanguinary encounters are fenced round with a code of rules and provisions preventive, if not absolutely exclusive of any possibility of foul play or treachery; and, gentlemen, it is my duty—my painful duty—to remind you that in this duel no such rules or preventives were observed; that it had neither seconds nor witnesses, and that though, from the circumstances already described, it may be charitably assumed that Major Hollis was willing, as a gentleman and a soldier, to afford his adversary that revenge for his wounded honour which the latter exacted, yet—as must not be forgotten—his own pistol was not discharged; neither is there the slightest evidence to show that he had any intention of discharging it, while the medical evidence goes indubitably to prove that, from the nature and direction of the death-wound, the unfortunate gentleman must have been taken at complete and most unfair disadvantage by the person who inflicted it."

The learned counsel sat down at last after a brief but eloquent peroration, during which one lady fainted in court, and several burst into tears; and the witnesses were called.

The first to be brought into the box were those connected with the club quarrel, and their evidence—which we already know—was so uniform, and so marked by an entire absence of animosity towards the prisoner whom it so terribly incriminated—

Lieutenant Carstairs indeed being moved almost to tears in his reluctance to bear witness to his friend's threats or his obstinacy about returning home—that Sir James Haycroft hardly cross-examined at all, and the case began to look very black for the defence.

The landlady made it no better. Her evidence we are also acquainted with; and though Sir James handled her pretty severely, especially as to whether the prisoner's face had been turned to or from Major Hollis's room when she first saw him, and also as to his dress and general appearance, he failed to shake her testimony in any material degree; and she went down in a state of triumph strongly in contrast to the pained and serious demeanour of the officers who had preceded her.

The doctor's was a longer and much more important matter, involving many technical details, and exciting intense interest, as it was known that on this evidence the case for Captain Pentreath's defence would be built up. Sir James Haycroft, indeed, woke to his work with a will at this point, and by a quick fire of questioning and cross-questioning, showed the line that he was going to take, i.e., that Major Hollis's death was purely accidental, being caused by the fact of his pistol going off while he was cleaning or examining it. Having extracted from the witness an admission, not only that this might have been the case, but that there was nothing in the appearance or position of the wounds to make it in any way improbable; having, by aid of a pistol which he held in his hand, and a plan of the room showing its shape and size, and the exact position of the body with respect to the fireplace and table, demonstrated how, after being discharged, the fatal weapon might have been jerked out of the hand of the deceased as he fell backward, and so have been lodged in the grate where it was found; he put on his most solemn manner, and appealed to the witness to tell the jury, on his oath, as an unprejudiced

observer, whether, had there been no quarrel at the club, or even had the prisoner been proved to have been with friends from the time of its occurrence, he, the doctor, would have hesitated before accepting the theory above set forth as the cause of death, in place of seeking any other explanation such as murder or the like.

The witness said, "Certainly not. I should have thought it the most natural one," and seemed about to add something more, but was instantly stopped with:

"Thank you. That is all that is necessary, and I am much obliged to you."

The counsel on the other side was up again in an instant, however, and put the poor doctor through his facings anew, but with little effect beyond proving the learned serjeant's previous statement that the shot, if fired by the prisoner, must have been discharged at murderously close quarters, the powder having singed the deceased officer's whisker and coat-collar; a point which produced the passionate exclamation from the prisoner of "Is it likely!" and the incident was over.

This had been the most exciting bit in the day's proceedings, and what followed—the examination of the two cabmen and of the servants from Guelder Lodge—was not particularly interesting to the general public; while poor old Hickson's extreme reluctance to say anything at all, and Mowcher's persistent attempts at shuffling, rather darkened the case for the prisoner than improved it. And with this the case for the prosecution closed, and the court adjourned for lunch, it being then past two o'clock.

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| TABLE A. WITHOUT BONUS | | | | | | TABLE B. WITH PARTICIPATION IN PROFITS | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|---|-----------|-------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Age next Birthday | PAYMENTS. | | Age next Birthday | PAYMENTS. | | Age next Birthday | PAYMENTS. | | Age next Birthday | PAYMENTS. | |
| | Yearly. | Half-yearly | | Yearly. | Half-yearly | | Yearly. | Half-yearly | | Yearly. | Half-yearly |
| 20 | £1 13 7 | £0 17 4 | 45 | £3 6 4 | £1 14 2 | 20 | £1 17 8 | £0 19 6 | 45 | £3 16 0 | £1 19 2 |
| 25 | 1 17 8 | 0 19 5 | 50 | 3 19 8 | 2 1 0 | 25 | 2 2 11 | 1 2 2 | 50 | 4 11 3 | 2 7 0 |
| 30 | 2 2 6 | 1 1 11 | 55 | 4 17 5 | 2 10 2 | 30 | 2 9 3 | 1 5 5 | 55 | 5 14 8 | 2 19 0 |
| 35 | 2 8 6 | 1 5 0 | 60 | 6 1 6 | 3 2 9 | 35 | 2 16 3 | 1 9 0 | 60 | 7 5 11 | 3 15 4 |
| 40 | 2 16 3 | 1 9 0 | 65 | 7 14 8 | 4 0 2 | 40 | 3 5 6 | 1 13 9 | 65 | 9 0 9 | 4 13 8 |

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For Assurance of £100 at Death—With Profits.

| Age next Birth-day. | Annual Premium payable during Life. | ANNUAL PREMIUM LIMITED TO | | | Single Payment. | Age next Birth-day. |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| | | Twenty-one Payments. | Fourteen Payments. | Seven Payments. | | |
| 21 | £1 16 3 | £2 10 6 | £3 4 11 | £5 10 0 | £33 0 1 | 21 |
| 22 | 1 16 9 | 2 11 0 | 3 5 9 | 5 11 0 | 33 5 10 | 22 |
| 23 | 1 17 2 | 2 11 6 | 3 6 5 | 5 12 1 | 33 11 2 | 23 |
| 24 | 1 17 7 | 2 12 1 | 3 6 11 | 5 13 1 | 33 16 5 | 24 |
| 25 | 1 18 0 | 2 12 6 | 3 7 3 | 5 14 0 | 34 2 0 | 25 |
| 26 | 1 18 6 | 2 13 0 | 3 7 10 | 5 14 11 | 34 8 2 | 26 |
| 27 | 1 19 2 | 2 13 6 | 3 8 7 | 5 15 11 | 34 16 1 | 27 |
| 28 | 1 19 11 | 2 14 1 | 3 9 5 | 5 17 1 | 35 4 9 | 28 |
| 29 | 2 0 8 | 2 14 8 | 3 10 3 | 5 18 6 | 35 14 1 | 29 |
| *30 | 2 1 6 | 2 15 4 | 3 11 2 | 6 0 1 | 36 4 0 | *30 |
| 31 | 2 2 6 | 2 16 2 | 3 12 1 | 6 1 10 | 36 14 6 | 31 |
| 32 | 2 3 5 | 2 17 1 | 3 13 2 | 6 3 8 | 37 5 5 | 32 |
| 33 | 2 4 6 | 2 18 0 | 3 14 4 | 6 5 8 | 37 17 2 | 33 |
| 34 | 2 5 7 | 2 19 0 | 3 15 7 | 6 7 9 | 38 9 7 | 34 |
| 35 | 2 6 10 | 3 0 2 | 3 16 11 | 6 10 0 | 39 2 9 | 35 |
| 36 | 2 8 2 | 3 1 5 | 3 18 4 | 6 12 5 | 39 16 11 | 36 |
| 37 | 2 9 8 | 3 2 9 | 3 19 11 | 6 15 0 | 40 12 4 | 37 |
| 38 | 2 11 3 | 3 4 3 | 4 1 7 | 6 17 9 | 41 8 7 | 38 |
| 39 | 2 12 11 | 3 5 9 | 4 3 4 | 7 0 7 | 42 5 4 | 39 |
| †40 | 2 14 9 | 3 7 5 | 4 5 2 | 7 3 7 | 43 2 10 | †40 |
| 41 | 2 16 8 | 3 9 2 | 4 7 2 | 7 6 8 | 44 0 11 | 41 |
| 42 | 2 18 8 | 3 11 1 | 4 9 3 | 7 9 11 | 44 19 9 | 42 |
| 43 | 3 0 11 | 3 13 1 | 4 11 5 | 7 13 3 | 45 19 3 | 43 |
| 44 | 3 3 3 | 3 15 3 | 4 13 10 | 7 16 9 | 46 19 7 | 44 |
| 45 | 3 5 9 | 3 17 6 | 4 16 4 | 8 0 7 | 48 0 8 | 45 |
| 46 | 3 8 5 | 4 0 0 | 4 19 1 | 8 4 6 | 49 2 8 | 46 |
| 47 | 3 11 5 | 4 2 8 | 5 2 1 | 8 8 8 | 50 5 8 | 47 |
| 48 | 3 14 8 | 4 5 8 | 5 5 4 | 8 13 2 | 51 9 7 | 48 |
| 49 | 3 18 1 | 4 8 9 | 5 8 9 | 8 17 11 | 52 14 1 | 49 |
| 50 | 4 1 7 | 4 12 1 | 5 12 4 | 9 2 10 | 53 19 3 | 50 |
| 51 | 4 5 6 | 4 15 5 | 5 16 1 | 9 7 11 | 55 4 5 | 51 |
| 52 | 4 9 5 | 4 18 10 | 5 19 11 | 9 13 1 | 56 9 0 | 52 |
| 53 | 4 13 5 | 5 2 5 | 6 3 11 | 9 18 3 | 57 12 11 | 53 |
| 54 | 4 17 8 | 5 6 3 | 6 8 0 | 10 3 5 | 58 17 2 | 54 |
| 55 | 5 1 11 | 5 10 2 | 6 12 1 | 10 8 6 | 60 0 8 | 55 |
| 56 | 5 6 4 | | 6 14 9 | 10 13 7 | 61 3 8 | 56 |
| 57 | 5 10 11 | | 6 18 8 | 10 18 8 | 62 6 5 | 57 |
| 58 | 5 15 9 | | 7 2 9 | 11 3 10 | 63 9 4 | 58 |
| 59 | 6 1 0 | | 7 7 3 | 11 9 0 | 64 12 11 | 59 |
| 60 | 6 6 7 | | 7 12 0 | 11 14 3 | 65 16 9 | 60 |

* EXAMPLE.—A person of 30 may thus secure £1000 at Death, by a yearly payment, during Life, of £20:15s. This Premium, if paid to any other of the Scottish Mutual Offices, would secure £800 only, instead of £1000.

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This statement leads up to a third, and that the most gratifying feature of the Report, namely, that the Realised Funds of the Institution have been increased in the year by the large sum of £307,797,—their amount at the close of 1882 being £4,509,728, against subsisting Assurances of £15,350,000. This, I need not say, is a very high proportion, particularly for an Office in which, from the low average age of the members, the premiums will continue to be drawn for a lengthened period.

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Mr. JOHN COWAN, Beeslack, seconded the motion; which, with the Resolution for earlier Payment of Claims, was unanimously approved of.

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